

enabling communication with the service station and the first gaming location comprising:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location including a first display visible from the first gaming location and displaying a message unrelated to play of the game without interrupting the game depending on a preference of a player stored in the memory before the message is displayed at the first gaming location;

an interactive second communication unit operable from the service station, including a second display visible from the service station; and

a network arranged to transmit data so that messages are displayed on the first display and the second display without interrupting the game.

Contrary to amended claim 1, Dubno interrupts the game during display of a menu as explained at Col. 4, lines 32-42:

The first player plays the game, accumulates his points and indicates, by his selector, his name associated with these points. The machine resets and the other patrons play. Competition is continued in this manner until, at a predetermined time after the monitor has been turned on, e.g. fifteen minutes, at the end of one part of the game and before the beginning of the next, the game mode is interrupted and the computer 22 transmits to the patron station, a menu which may be printed and graphically displayed, with drawings or like video augmentation.

Similarly, Dubno teaches terminating the game when food is ready and resuming the game after a period for eating (Col. 6, lines 14-28). Thus, Dubno is the antithesis of amended claim 1 in which a message is displayed without interrupting the game. As a result, claim 1 is allowable over Dubno.

The Examiner states (page 3-4):

Dubno et al. lacks in disclosing a card reader and storing a player's preference prior to displaying the message... It is obvious to store a player's preference in memory so that game activity can be to a player's preference. Therefore, it is obvious to store how a player wants messages received on their display prior to actually displaying any message.

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner cites only Col. 3 lines 30-54 of Walker. This section teaches that the preferences are used only to configure the game (Col. 3, line 39-40 and 51-53). Thus, Walker fails to teach display of a message unrelated to play of the game as claimed. Even if the Dubno and Walker Patents were combined as suggested by the Examiner, they would not result in the claimed combination. In addition, it does not follow from Walker (who teaches how to configure a game) that it is obvious to store how a player wants messages received on their display prior to actually displaying any message. Such a concept was not obvious to Dubno or Walker, neither of whom teach or suggest it. For all the foregoing reasons, claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2-7 are dependent on claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 9 is dependent on claim 1 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim

1. In addition, Claim 9 is limited to:

[Apparatus] wherein the preference comprises a preference authorizing the player to be located, and wherein the second display is arranged to display an identification of the location of the player in response to the code.

Neither Dubno nor Walker teaches or suggests the above-quoted limitation of claim 9. On page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner cites only Col. 3 lines 30-54 of Walker. This section teaches that the preferences are used only to configure the game (Col. 3, line 39-40 and 51-53). The undersigned has been unable to locate any section of Walker that teaches locating a player by any means, much less the claimed features. More specifically, there is no known teaching or suggestion that a preference authorizes a player to be located. This feature is advantages, because a player may not want to be located. Even if Walker were combined with Dubno as suggested by the Examiner, the resulting combination would not result in the claimed features.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner states:

When a player enters the card into the gaming machine they are tracked thus authorizing the casino to be located. It is obvious that the central authority could have could have a second display arranged to display an identification of the location of the player in response to the code on the player's card.

The Examiner cites no section of Walker (or Dubno) that teaches or suggests that placing a card into a gaming machine authorizes the casino to locate the player.

Indeed, the player may not want to be located. Thus, the entry of a preference authorizing the player to be located, as claimed, is an unobvious feature neither taught nor suggested by Dubno nor Walker. For all the foregoing reasons, claim 9 is allowable.

Claim 11 depends on claim 9. As a result, claims 9 and 11 are allowable. In addition, since claim 11 also is dependent on claim 1, claim 11 is limited to a map, which is displayed based on a preference stored in memory before the map is displayed. This concept is neither taught nor suggested by Dubno or Walker. As a result, claim 11 is allowable.

Claim 24 has been amended in a manner analogous to claim 1 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 25-26 are dependent on claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 24. Claims 27 and 33 are analogous to claim 9 and are allowable on the same grounds as claim 9. Claims 28 and 35 are analogous to claim 11 and are allowable on the same grounds as claim 11. Claims 29-31 are dependent on claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 24. Claims 32 and 34 have been canceled.

The rejection of claims 13-15 and 37-39 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubno in view of Walker in further view Hedrick et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,135,884, "Hedrick") is respectfully traversed. Claims 13-15 are dependent on amended claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 1.

Since claim 13 depends on claim 1, claim 13 is limited to a display of a menu of reservation services depending on a preference of a player stored in memory before the

reservation services are displayed. None of the cited patents teaches or suggests such a combination. As a result, claim 13 is allowable.

Claim 14 also is allowable over Dubno, Walker and Hedrick. Amended claim 14 is limited to:

The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first display displays a message enabling entry of a name of a person and a message.

The above-quoted limitation is supported by the embodiments of the invention described in connection with Figs. 13-14. Neither Dubno, Walker nor Hedrick teach or suggest a message enabling entry of a name of a person as claimed. In the Office Action, the Examiner does not appear to address the underlined portion of claim 14. Since none of the cited patents teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 14, the claim is allowable.

Since claim 15 depends on claim 1, claim 15 is limited to a display of a message sent to the first display from the service station depending on a preference of a player stored in memory before the message is displayed. None of the cited patents teaches or suggests such a combination. As a result, claim 15 is allowable.

Claims 37-39 are dependent on amended claim 24 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 24. In addition, claims 37-39 are analogous to claims 13-15 and are allowable for the same reasons as claims 13-15.

The rejection of claims 12 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubno et al. in view of Walker et al. in further view of Franchi (U.S. Patent No. 5,770,533) is respectfully traversed. Claim 12 is dependent on amended claim 1 and is

allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Claim 36 is dependent on amended claim 24 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 24.

In addition claim 12 has been amended to more clearly distinguish it from the cited references. Amended claim 12 reads:

12. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first display displays a menu of a plurality of types of personal service available according to the preferences of the player.

Nothing in Dubno or Franchi teaches or suggests the claimed features. As a result, claim 12 is allowable.

Claim 36 has been amended in a manner analogous to claim 12 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 12.

The rejection of claims 16, 17 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dubno et al. in view of Walker et al. in further view of Ehrman (U.S. Patent No. 5,984,786) is respectfully traversed. Amended claim 16 is limited to:

The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first gaming location is arranged to accommodate a first player and wherein the first communication unit enables entry of at least one of a name of a second player and a second player code and enables entry of a first message, the apparatus further comprising a central authority, a second gaming location arranged to accommodate a second player, an interactive third communication unit operable from the second gaming location, including a third display visible from the second gaming location, the third communication unit enabling entry of at least one of a name of the first player and a first player code

and enabling entry of a second message, wherein the central authority is arranged to identify the first gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the first player and the first player code and is arranged to identify the second gaming location in response to at least one of the second player name and second player code,...

Although Ehrman teaches a chat box 49 in which players type messages to each other, he does not teach or suggest the underlined features quoted above that enable entry of at least one of a name of a player and a player code. Thus, even if Dubno, Walker and Ehrman were combined in the manner suggested by the Examiner, they would not result in the claimed underlined features. Thus, claim 16 is allowable. Claim 17 depends on claim 16 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 16. In addition, claim 17 is limited to a code comprising a player ID number, another feature not taught or suggested by Ehrman. As a result, claim 17 is allowable.

Amended claim 40 is analogous to amended claim 16 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 16.

On page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner states:

It is obvious that both in order to chat, both players must enter the name of the other player. It is also well known to enter the code such as an ID number, of another player in order to chat.

In fact, a player may not want his identity revealed. Moreover, entry of an ID number normally is not required for messaging. The ID number would serve as a way of communicating without revealing the player's name. As a result, claim 16 defines unique features for communicating that enable a player to remain anonymous. Since

none of the cited patents teach or suggest such a feature, claims 16, 17 and 40 are allowable.

The rejection of claims 18, 19, 21-23 and 41-48 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ehrman is respectfully traversed. Amended claim 18 is limited to:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location and arranged to accommodate a first player, the first communication unit including a first display visible from the first gaming location, enabling entry of at least one of a name of a second player and a second player code and enabling entry of a first message;

an interactive second communication unit operable from the second gaming location and arranged to accommodate a second player, the second communication unit including a second display visible from the second gaming location, enabling entry of at least one of a name of the first player and a first player code and enabling entry of a second message; and

a network arranged transmit data resulting in display of the first message on the second display and arranged to transmit data resulting in display of the second message on the first display.

Nothing in Ehrman teaches or suggests the above-quoted limitations for the reasons explained in connection with claim 16. For all of the reasons explained in connection with claim 16, amended claim 18 allowable.

Claims 19 and 21-23 are dependent on claim 18 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 18. Claims 19 and 20 have been amended to further distinguish them from Dubno. Amended claim 19 is limited to:

The apparatus of claim 18 and further comprising a central authority arranged to identify the first gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the first player and the first player code and arranged to identify the second gaming location in response to at least one of the name of the second player and the second player code.

Ehrman does not teach or suggest the above-quoted limitation. Since Ehrman does not teach or suggest entry of the name or a player code, Ehrman cannot locate a gaming location by means of such name or code. As a result, claim 19 is allowable.

Amended claim 41 is analogous to amended claim 18 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 18. Claims 42-48 are dependent on claim 41 and are allowable for the same reasons as claim 41.

The rejection of claim 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ehrman in view of Walker is respectfully traversed. Claim 20 is dependent on claim 18 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 18.

Amended claim 20 is limited to:


a first card reader operable from the first gaming location and a second card reader operable from the second gaming location, the first and second card readers being operable to read a code from a card entered by a player and wherein the central authority identifies at least one of the first gaming location and second gaming location in response to the code

Ehrman does not appear to disclose any card reader, much less a card reader and central authority with the claimed features. Walker does disclose a card reader 364 for providing an ID number and name in connection with receiving player preferences for game configuration (Figs. 10A-10B). However, there is no known part of Walker that teaches or suggests locating a gaming location in response to the code read from a card as claimed. Even if Ehrman and Walker were combined as suggested by the Examiner, the claimed combination would not result. As a result, claim 20 is allowable.

For all the foregoing reasons, each of claims 1-7, 9, 11-31, 33 and 35-48 defines patentable subject matter, and early allowance is solicited.

Date: May 29, 2003

Respectfully submitted,



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ATTACHMENT SHOWING CLAIM AMENDMENTS
Application No. 09/982,244, Filed October 17, 2001
Docket No. 13253US01

1. (Twice Amended) In a gaming system comprising a memory, a service station and at least a first gaming location enabling play of a game, apparatus for enabling communication with the service station and the first gaming location comprising:

an interactive first communication unit operable from the first gaming location including a first display visible from the first gaming location and displaying a message unrelated to play of the game without interrupting the game depending on a preference of a player stored in the memory before the message is displayed at the first gaming location;

an interactive second communication unit operable from the service station, including a second display visible from the service station; and

a network arranged to transmit data so that messages are displayed on the first display and the second display.

12. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first display displays a menu of a plurality of types of personal service available according to the preferences of the player.

24. (Twice Amended) In a gaming system comprising a service station, a memory and at least a first gaming location enabling play of a game by a first player, a method of enabling communication with the service station and the first gaming location comprising:

storing a preference of the first player in the memory;

generating messages at the first gaming location and displaying messages unrelated to play of the game without interrupting the game, the messages being visible from the first gaming location interactively after the preference is stored in the memory;

generating messages at the service station and displaying messages visible from the service station interactively; and

transmitting the generated messages.

36. (Amended) The method of claim of claim 24 wherein said displaying messages visible from the first gaming location comprises displaying a menu of a plurality of types of personal service available according to the preferences of the player.

38. (Amended) The method of claim 24 wherein said displaying messages visible from the first gaming location comprises displaying a menu of personal message services available and enabling entry of a name of a person and a message.